Increasing Prices of Pulses

2750. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that pulses are the main source of protein for the common man of the country;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the prices of pulses are increasing at a faster rate in the country at present;

(c) if so, the reasons for high price of pulses; and

(d) whether Government propose to reorient its planning to make pulses available to common man at affordable prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There has been an upward movement of the wholesale price index for pulses in September, 1994 in comparison to the same period last year.

(c) and (d) The Centrally Sponsored National Pulses Development Project (NPDP) is being implemented in 25 States and U.T. of A&N Islands to increase the production of pulses with key components such as production and distribution of seeds, improved farm implements, sprinkler sets, rhyzobium culture, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) etc. In order to disseminate the latest production technologies to the farmers, general demonstrations and frontline demonstrations are being organised through the State Department of Agriculture and ICAR respectively. The production of pulses during 1993-94 has reached as estimated 14.2 million tonnes. In addition, import of pulses is allowed under OGL to increase the availability of pulses.

Agreement with other Countries to Boost Agricultural Sector

2751. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has signed any agreement with other countries including France to boost farm sector, exchange track mission and promote co-operation in transfer of technology etc. till date; and

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating how quality control and testing standards etc. would be implemented in agricultural sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) and (b) India has signed agreements with several countries including France, Israel, Netherlands, Syria, Philippines, Nepal, Indonesia, Cyprus, China, Mauritius, Monogolia, Iran, Vietnam, etc. for promoting co-operation in the field of agriculture. The agreements provide for developing scientific, technical and economic co-operation with these countries in the field of agriculture and allied sectors through joint research activities, training, exchange of scientists and experts, material and information, organisation of exhibitions, symposia, trade meetings etc.

The work Schedule signed on 9th November, 1994 between Government of India and the Government of France under the Indo-French Agreement for co-operation in the field of agriculture and agro-food industries specifically includes proposals for joint ventures, transfer of technology, supply of equipment and exchange of trade missions between the two countries. The work Schedule also includes proposals for improving quality control and testing procedures in India in the production and packaging of fruit and vegetables, milk products and production of seeds of temperate vegetables by obtaining French assistance in transfer of technology; training of Indian technologists and quality control staff and research & development.

Gaps in Agricultural Research Activities

2752. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that despite having a vast network of agricultural research institutions in the country there are serious gaps in India's agricultural research activities as reported in the 'Hindustan Times' dated 7th November, 1994;

(b) whether Directors of the research institutions under ICAR met in New Delhi recently in an effort to plug these gaps and reorient the system to face up the new challenges on the farm front;

(c) if so, what are the details of discussions held and outcome thereof to increase production of cereals, pulses and oilseeds and whether in other areas such as horticulture, animal husbandry and food processing, any research is likely to be undertaken; and if so with what results; and

(d) by when Government propose to amend ICAR rules in order to back-up the agri-business concept and new export orientation on the farm sector, give details; and if not, the reasons for delay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) to (c) The Indian Agricultural Research System is considered to be one of the best and is being adopted by many developing countries. The Directors of Research Institutes under ICAR system met in New Delhi on November 7th and 8th, 1994. It was